



I am with you

K.

**Beholding the higher Light beyond the darkness
we came to the divine Sun in the Godhead,
to the highest Light of all.**

Translated from Rig Veda by Sri Aurobindo
The Life Divine, Ch. XXVI

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said: "Oh, yes! Do you like it?" I said: "It is good, but it is soulless." He asked: "Soulless? What do you mean?"

I said: "In this large Exhibition, there is no mention of Sri Aurobindo, the soul of India, who ignited the nation with the fire of aspiration for India's independence much before Gandhiji came on the scene." He replied: "Sri Aurobindo is not only the soul of India, he is the soul of the world. Tell us what we should have. Why don't you write a letter to us, stating how much space you need." I said: "I will, but in the meantime, you could at least, exhibit his books." "Oh, certainly!" he said. Then he called his secretary and asked him to send a telegram to the Ashram, requesting to send the entire set of Sri Aurobindo's works.

I wrote a letter to Mr. Panikkar and addressed it to his office at the Ministry of International Trade in New Delhi, on the 3rd of June. The Prime Minister Nehru had just passed away. I said: "The beautiful dream of Nehru in his pledge on the 15th of August would remain unfulfilled without the help of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother who alone can lead India to her true greatness. For, only when the nation is led by a leader of the elite, can it truly fulfill its highest destiny...."

It was a long letter with copies sent to The Mother, Shri Surendra Mohan Ghose and Sudhir Ghose, which The Mother approved and gave me twenty marks out of twenty. She wrote to me later that they were hurrying about the exhibits, of which Udar was put in charge. Let me give some extracts of the letter which The Mother so enthusiastically commended:

"It is indeed strange that the Americans who are looked upon as the most materialistic in the world, have a separate huge pavilion for one of their religious leaders, Billy Graham; whereas, we Indians who are proud and boast of having the greatest spiritual history, have completely ignored one of the greatest spiritual leaders of our times. It is indeed sad that the soul and spirit of India is conspicuously absent in the Indian pavilion.

"If I love India and am proud to call it my heritage, it is the India that is being rebuilt at the feet of The Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Gandhiji has been given prominence at the Indian pavilion and I recognise him as a religious man, a moral and ethical man, a leader of the masses, but he was certainly not a spiritual man. He had no doubt the unique contribution of building the mind and the character of the masses. But it is not given to the leader of the masses

to lead the nation to its highest glory. A great country like India whose true wealth lies in her spiritual culture, can be led to fulfill her mission only by Sri Aurobindo."

And I ended this letter with a request for a room by the side of the fountain for an exhibition of Sri Aurobindo's works, the Ashram products and the activities of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education with the relevant quotations from the writings of The Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi was the chairperson of the Exhibition Committee and the letter was read out to her at a meeting. She commented that it was a strong letter and they had to do something. They gave us the room I had asked for. This was communicated to the Mother and Udar was put in charge. I informed Narad and Anie about it. This was in June, and I left in July. But to my knowledge, in spite of the Mother's writing to me, "We are hurrying about the exhibits," nothing came out of it.

In the meantime, Chinmoy had come to America and I was invited to meet him at Sam and Eric's house. He was just a shy young man and did not even lift his eyes when I was introduced to him. He simply gave me the gift The Mother had sent: Her Crown. It was a most precious gift. I hardly felt worthy of it. I took it with utter reverence. As I touched it and concentrated on it I felt that a unique current passed through me, leaving me with supreme Bliss.

I have passed days and nights meditating with it, and had many experiences. It not only gave me confidence in my spiritual destiny, but mystic wings to fly with too.

Then I received a copy of the letter signed by Nolini-da and sent to me by Mrs. Montgomery. The letter had evidently come to Dr. Sanyal, and copies were sent by him to some known disciples of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. It said that The Mother had not sent Chinmoy to America to speak on Sri Aurobindo, but he had come of his own accord. When Chinmoy received this news he was visibly shaken. I felt sympathetic and invited him to my house since in my simple outlook whoever spent years of life doing *sadhana* in the Ashram and had come from the Ashram deserved care and attention.

He told me that he had prepared talks to introduce Sri Aurobindo to the American public as he had felt an urge to do so. When all was arranged, he wrote a letter to The Mother informing Her and asked for Her blessings. He showed me his letter with the blessings of The Mother.

When I asked him further questions about his education, his stay in the Ashram, his life and work, he was both frank and truthful. I found him simple and well-intentioned. His only question was: "Why didn't The Mother stop me?"

To my mind it was clear. He had not asked to be guided by The Mother's Will, but had presented Her with his plan and asked Her for Her blessings. The Mother being *anumanta*, (one who consents), lets one find out whatever one has to experience, unless one specifically asks for Her advice.

In any case, I wrote a letter to The Mother reporting the conversation that took place between us, adding my own interpretation of the whole incident, saying that in my view, Chinmoy was a simple person who worked from the heart and was not an intellectual. So, he had interpreted The Mother's blessings as Her approval and consent. "Why did Nolini-da write such a severe letter?" I asked. And I added a postscript saying that The Mother could show my letter to Nolini-da if She wanted. I showed it to Chinmoy. I was told by his sister that The Mother passed on my letter, saying: "This is what I call understanding". She graciously replied to my letter:

15 - 5 - 64

Kailas, my dear child,

Received and read your long letter about Chinmoy. What you have seen is correct.

Here is a quotation you can show him if you see him

"I give order to those who are perfectly and totally surrendered, as these orders cannot be discussed or disobeyed."

Most likely it is Ch. [Chinmoy] himself who has typed this quotation to which the following words can be added to make it more clear.

"Because all disobeying or questioning of these orders clouds the consciousness."

With all my love.

The Mother

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I showed Chinmoy what The Mother wrote. It probably hurt him. But he was honest. He knew that he could no longer stay with Sam and Eric. He needed to earn his livelihood. He asked me if I could help him to find a job. I understood his predicament and said there was only one place I could try and that was the Indian Consulate, because of his visa. I wrote a letter to the Consul General, introducing him as a student from the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, where degrees and diplomas are not given. I mentioned however that he had written a book of poems which had been published.

Well, he was called for an interview by the Consul General who was a Bengali and they found a common friend in Dilip Kumar Roy. He was accepted to work in the passport department and from then on he could stand on his own.

Chinmoy now felt that he could not speak in the name of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother in public. So, he started off on his own, keeping the four rules of the Ashram as discipline for the persons who sought his guidance. In his own way, he has been an inspiration not only to the youth of America and other countries, but also to many well-known persons. I do not know much about his teachings, but from what I know of him, he inspires people to exceed themselves in whatever they do, setting the example himself, never interfering with their personal or religious beliefs.

However, he has kept the Centenary volumes of Sri Aurobindo at his Centre in Jamaica and sings a hymn in Bengali addressed to Sri Aurobindo. He guards respect for the Ashram and sends his contribution.

In 1991, when I revisited the USA, almost after thirty years, with Richard – who had been his classmate – we had a pleasant surprise. I tried to contact Chinmoy, but he was not available on the phone. His disciple conveyed my message to him and informed me that I could meet him at the United Nations where he held a prayer meeting and meditation every Tuesday.

We went there and were received by a disciple and taken to the Hall where we attended the meditation, preceded by songs for peace written by him and beautifully sung by his small choir. Then there was a distribution of prasad. He called us first and greeted us affectionately, giving each of us a rose and prasad.

We waited till the distribution was over. When he came to know that it was my birthday, he invited us to his Centre for lunch and took us with him in his car. We were impressed with the atmosphere of

friendliness among his disciples and the cleanliness all around. His disciples were both disciplined and devoted. We were then invited to a dinner in the evening and a stay for a few days. We were escorted back by his disciple, his personal attendant, Ashrit, who was asked to bring us back in the evening.

We had a meeting with the disciples of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother at the Manhattan Centre where Miriam held a monthly meeting. They had also arranged a dinner for all of us to celebrate my birthday. It was kept a surprise for me. That day, there was a torrential shower of rain and we had to pick up our luggage, so we were unavoidably late. We had to phone Chinmoy about the delay.

We reached the Centre at 11. 30 p. m. in pouring rain— three hours late—and all the while his disciples and musicians were silently awaiting our arrival. The area was all decorated with large statues of Kali, Krishna, Shiva and Ganesh. The lamps were lit and flowers were arranged. The chorus sang many hymns composed and set to music by Chinmoy himself. There was a serene and pleasant atmosphere, inspiring a prayerful attitude. Then he gave us gifts with a contribution of \$400 to each of us. Many photographs were taken. And we were escorted to the Holiday Inn hotel.

The next day, we saw some of the activities of the Centre and played tennis with Chinmoy himself. In the evening there was a prayer session for his disciples in the hall of a nearby school, where they usually met on Wednesday. But that evening, Chinmoy surprised us by playing a solo on about thirty different instruments and ending with a hymn to Sri Aurobindo in Bengali. This gives us an example of his virtuosity.

When the programme was over, he asked me softly: "Would The Mother ever forgive me for my lapse?" Overwhelmed by his humility, I spontaneously said: "There is no question. She is the Divine Mother and we are all Her children."

Next day, Chinmoy sent Ashrit to drive us to our next destination in Washington, D.C. All this is to show how he went beyond the customary way to profoundly express his gratitude for a small act of courtesy I had done to him in 1964.

When Dr. Sanyal came for his operation, I visited him everyday of his stay in the house of Mr. Tata who was the first to publish the books of Sri Aurobindo in America. I later used to see him in the hospital.

Whenever I went to Dr. Sanyal, I would ask him about his